United Nations ICCD/CRIC(13)/INF.1

Convention to Combat Desertification

UNCCD

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Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention
Thirteenth session
Bonn, 25–27 March 2015

Information for participants

The thirteenth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 13) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), hereinafter referred to as "the conference", will be held from 25 to 27 March 2015 in Bonn, Germany. The present document contains general information which may be helpful to participants. Additional information will be provided in due course on the UNCCD website: <www.unccd.int>.

1. Secretariat

The secretariat of the UNCCD is headed by the Executive Secretary, Ms. Monique Barbut, and based in Bonn, Germany, at:

Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
Langer Eugen
Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1
53113 Bonn, Germany
Tel.: + 49 228 815 2800
Fax: + 49 228 815 2898/99
E-mail: secretariat@unccd.int

2. Venue of the conference

The CRIC will convene its thirteenth session from 25 to 27 March 2015 at the World Conference Center Bonn (WCCB) in the Wasserwerk and Pumpenhaus buildings. Access to the WCCB buildings will be provided to participants through the main entrance of the United Nations Campus located at the above-mentioned address.

Regional consultations of affected country Parties of the Convention's regional implementation annexes for Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Northern Mediterranean and Central Eastern European country Parties in preparation for CRIC 13 will be convened from 23 to 24 March 2015 and will be held within the United Nations Campus.

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3. Admittance to the session

The provisions governing the Conference of the Parties (COP) apply mutatis mutandis to the proceedings of its subsidiary bodies. Participation in the conference is therefore open to Party delegations, United Nations specialized agencies and observers in accordance with the provisions of the UNCCD and the rules of procedure of the COP.[1]

Party delegations do not need to present credentials since the CRIC and the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) are subsidiary bodies of the COP. However, an official list of delegation members should be forwarded to the UNCCD secretariat before the conference session, for registration and security purposes. Observers already accredited to previous sessions of the COP should also comply with this requirement.

Any body or agency, whether national or international, governmental or non-governmental, which has not yet obtained observer status may be admitted to the conference on submission of an official request to the UNCCD secretariat, pending the decision on its accreditation as an observer by the COP at its next ordinary session. This request should state the competence or qualification of the body or agency in matters covered by the UNCCD.

4. Registration

Registration for national delegations, specialized agencies and United Nations programmes, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as for the media and staff of the United Nations, will take place from Monday, 23 March 2015 to Friday, 27 March 2015 at the main entrance of the United Nations Campus:

Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1
D-53113 Bonn, Germany

Registration will continue throughout the session on working days from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., with the exception of Friday, 27 March 2015 when registration will end at noon.

In addition to the Plenary Hall located in the WCCB, meeting rooms will be made available within the United Nations Campus, without interpretation services, for informal meetings. Arrangements for such meetings should be made with the secretariat.[2] Working hours will normally be from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 to 6 p.m.

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[1] In accordance with article 36, paragraph 2, of the Convention, for each State or regional economic integration organization which ratifies, accepts, approves or accedes to the Convention after the deposit of the fiftieth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, the Convention enters into force on the ninetieth day after the date of deposit by such State or regional economic integration organization of its instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession. Consequently, the Parties as at the opening of the conference on 25 March 2015 will be the States and regional economic integration organizations that have deposited their instruments by 25 December 2014. States that deposited their instruments after 25 December 2014 but by 27 December 2014 will become Parties during the session. States that deposited their instruments after 27 December 2014 will not become Parties until after the session is closed, but may participate in the session as observers. Intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental and civil society organizations and observers that were accredited at the eleventh session of the COP are listed in document ICCD/COP(11)/20/Rev.1. Relevant information on the status of ratifications is available on the UNCCD website: <www.unccd.int>.

[2] Please check the Official Journal of the session for relevant contacts.

Identity badges will be issued at the time of registration, and participants are requested to wear them at all times since access to the WCCB is allowed only upon presentation of badges.

5. How to get to the conference venue

Flights

Some airlines have direct flights to Cologne-Bonn and many others fly to Frankfurt or Düsseldorf. There are numerous train connections between the Frankfurt and Düsseldorf airports and Bonn. It may be possible to book a train ticket together with the airline ticket (travel agents may provide related information), or train tickets can be purchased at the airport railway station.

From Cologne-Bonn airport

Cologne-Bonn airport is approximately 30 minutes' drive from the centre of Bonn. Participants arriving at this airport can take a taxi or bus to Bonn city centre. Taxis are readily available; a one-way journey to the city costs approximately EUR 50. The Airport Express SB60 (bus stop at the arrival level of Terminal 1) connects the airport with Bonn's main railway station (Hauptbahnhof). The price of a one-way bus ticket to Bonn is EUR 7.70. Tickets may be purchased from the driver or at the ticket machine at the bus stop. The "Conference ticket", which is included in the price of accommodation if the booking is made through the Bonn Tourism and Congress Office (see below), may be used for this bus.

From Frankfurt airport to Bonn city centre

Participants arriving at Frankfurt airport should go to the Frankfurt airport long-distance railway station, which is reached by following the signs to *Frankfurt Flughafen Fernbahnhof* (Frankfurt airport long-distance railway station). This station is in the AIRail Terminal, next to Terminal 1. Trains arrive at and depart from platforms 4 to 7. Participants are recommended to travel either by high-speed InterCity-Express (ICE) train to Siegburg/Bonn or by direct Intercity (IC)/Eurocity (EC) train to Bonn central station (Bonn Hauptbahnhof).

High-speed ICE trains to Siegburg/Bonn or IC/EC trains to Bonn central station leave from the Frankfurt airport long-distance railway station two or three times every hour between 5 a.m. and 9 p.m. The high-speed ICE train journey to Siegburg/Bonn takes 40 minutes. Trains leave at least once an hour. The IC/EC train goes directly to Bonn central station (in the centre of Bonn); the journey time is between 1½ and 2 hours. For additional information, please check: <www.bahn.de>.

From Siegburg/Bonn railway station to Bonn city centre

Passengers travelling to Bonn via Siegburg/Bonn ICE station should change at Siegburg/Bonn station onto the local tram (Telekom Express line 66), which leaves every ten minutes. To reach the tram, passengers will have a seven-minute walk (clearly marked) from the ICE platform to tram 66.

Journey time into the centre of Bonn is about 30 minutes. Tickets can be purchased on the tram. A one-way journey by taxi from Siegburg to Bonn costs approximately EUR 35.

From the main railway station (Hauptbahnhof) in Bonn to the World Conference Center Bonn

Participants travelling by public transport from Bonn to the United Nations Campus and the WCCB may use either bus or underground train (U-Bahn).

Bus lines 610 and 611 (direction Heiderhof/Pappelweg) pass near the United Nations Campus and the WCCB; participants should alight at the *Deutsche Welle* bus stop.

The underground (U-Bahn) lines 16, 63 and 66 (direction Bad Godesberg, Bad Honnef and Königswinter, respectively) also stop near the WCCB; participants should alight at the *Heussallee/Museumsmeile* stop, follow the sign for "Heussallee" and walk down that road for approximately 5–10 minutes. The United Nations Campus and the WCCB are at the end of Heussallee.

6. Hotel accommodation

Hotel bookings should be made directly by participants. Reservations for hotel rooms may be made through the Bonn Tourism and Congress Office, using the following link:

<http://www.bonn-region.de/events/cric13.html >

Alternatively, bookings may be made by contacting the Bonn Tourism and Congress Office at:

Tourismus & Congress GmbH
Region Bonn/Rhein-Sieg/Ahrweiler im WorldCCBonn
Platz der Vereinten Nationen 2
D-53113 Bonn, Germany
Hotel Reservation Department
Hotline: + 49 228 910 4133
E-mail: a.isengard@bonn-region.de
(Monday to Friday: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

All bookings made through the Bonn Tourism and Congress Office include a "Conference ticket", which is valid on public transport in Bonn for the duration of the stay. This ticket is not transferable and will be issued together with the hotel reservation confirmation mail as a printable PDF document. Please do not forget to print out your ticket and to bring it with you.

7. Services available for participants at the conference venue

Information on medical services and emergency numbers, postal, telephone, fax, photocopying and Internet services, cafeteria and bars, banking services, travel agency and any other additional services available for participants will be published in the Official Journal of the session.

It is to be noted that the present CRIC session will be paperless. Accordingly, official documents of the session or its Official Journal will not be printed and distributed but made available electronically on the UNCCD website at:

<www.unccd.int/en/about-the-convention/officialdocuments/Pages/SessionDisplay.aspx?k=CRIC(13)>

8. Immigration formalities and customs regulations

The Government of Germany has advised that immigration formalities will be facilitated at its embassies or consulates. Applications may be submitted, referring to the Committee session, to the competent German embassy or consulate.[3]

European Union nationals do not require a visa to enter the Federal Republic of Germany.

Generally speaking, all other foreigners require a visa for stays in Germany. A visa is not required for visits of up to 90 days in any 180-day period for nationals of those countries for which the European Community has abolished the visa requirement.[4]

As a rule, applicants must submit visa applications, together with all necessary documents, in person at the German mission responsible for their place of residence. In order to avoid time-consuming requests for additional information or documentation, applicants should consult the website of the respective mission well in advance of their departure date to find out about the visa procedure and about the documentation which has to be submitted. Visa application forms can be obtained from the mission free of charge (in the local language).[5] The forms submitted must be original versions in the appropriate language of the mission in question.

Visa fees are waived for United Nations conference participants.

As a rule, missions require between two and ten working days to make a decision on an application for a short-stay visa.

In addition, many German missions have introduced an electronic appointment system to help manage the number of visitors to the mission and thus shorten waiting times. Please note that some Embassies are booked for several weeks in advance. Exceptional appointments are limited and cannot be guaranteed, even if the conference is supported by the Federal Foreign Office, Department VN09. In urgent cases please contact the Head of the Visa Section of the German mission in charge directly and immediately (e-mail: info@*city*.diplo.de; website: <www.*city*.diplo.de>).

The online application system "Videx"[6] enables applicants to complete their application form for a Schengen visa online. The application cannot, however, be submitted online. It has to be printed out and submitted in person to the responsible embassy, consulate or external service provider, where the data will be scanned. This eases the process and ensures that the application is complete.

Further information on the procedure and details of the documents to be presented are available on the website of the competent German embassy or directly from the embassy itself. Participants are advised to contact the German embassy as soon as possible.

Information on customs regulations in force in Germany may be obtained from any German embassy or consulate.

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[3] Please check the following website in order to find the competent German mission: <www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/Startseite_node.html>.

[4] You will find an overview of visa requirements here: <www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/EinreiseUndAufenthalt/StaatenlisteVisumpflicht_node.html>.

[5] Applicants may also download the forms here: <www.auswaertigesamt.de/cae/servlet/contentblob/480874/>.

[6] "Videx" can be accessed at <https://videx.diplo.de>.

9. Intervention at official meetings

By resolution 64/230 on the Pattern of Conferences and the report of the Fifth Committee to the General Assembly (document A/64/580), the General Assembly reiterates its request to ensure the provision of high-quality conference services to Member States and other participants in official United Nations meetings.

In the interest of the smooth running of the meetings, participants need to maintain a normal speed when delivering speeches or making statements, so that the provision of the required high-quality simultaneous interpretation services can be achieved to the entire satisfaction of all concerned.

10. Side events and exhibition facilities

Due to the limited availability of funding and space, the current session will not organize side events nor provide exhibition facilities.

11. Press centre/information for the media

For information concerning accreditation, please contact:

Ms. Wagaki Mwangi
Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
Langer Eugen
Hermann-Ehlers-Strasse 10
53113 Bonn, Germany
Tel.: + 49 228 815 2820
Fax: + 49 228 815 2898/99
E-mail: wmwangi@unccd.int

12. General information about the conference venue

Information about Bonn

Useful information about the city of Bonn, including accommodation, transport and other services and facilities, can be found at <http://www.bonn-region.de>.

Currency

EUR 1 = approximately USD 1.22 (indicative rate January 2015)

Weather

The month of March is characterized by *rising* daily high temperatures, with daily highs increasing from 9°C to 14°C over the course of the month. Throughout March, the most common forms of precipitation are moderate rain and light rain; participants are therefore recommended to bring an umbrella. Coat racks will be available next to the Plenary Hall.

Electricity

Electricity: 220 volts; 50 Hz European plugs with two round metal pins are used.

Local time

GMT + 1 hour.

Further information is available on the UNCCD home page at <www.unccd.int>.

United Nations

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Convention to Combat Desertification

UNCCD

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Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention
Thirteenth session
Bonn, 25–27 March 2015
Item 2 of the provisional agenda
Assessment of implementation of the Convention

Status report on the 2014–2015 reporting and review process

Note by the secretariat

Summary

This document provides a status report on the 2014–2015 reporting and review process. It contains information on reports submitted by 31 July 2014, the formal deadline for submission of inputs from reporting entities, as well as reports that have undergone a data quality improvement exercise undertaken in consultations with country Parties and other relevant reporting entities up to 3 October 2014.

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I. Introduction

1. By its decision 16/COP.11, the Conference of the Parties (COP) requests the secretariat and the Global Mechanism, as relevant, to undertake a number of improvements for the 2014–2015 reporting and review exercise, including: (a) to simplify the performance review and assessment of implementation system (PRAIS) and reduce the overall number of performance indicators; (b) to improve the reporting format and enhance the usability of online reporting; and (c) to prepare revised reporting guidelines and templates accordingly. By the same decision, the COP requested the Convention's institutions: (a) to undertake capacity-building activities on the alignment of national action programmes, performance and progress reporting in each region or subregion, including, inter alia, regional workshops; and (b) to explore mechanisms and a data quality framework prior to the review by the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC), in order to increase the reliability of information.

2. Reporting templates for affected and developed country Parties were issued at the beginning of February 2014, and other reporting tools (reporting manual and glossary) were made available in the six official languages of the United Nations; the new PRAIS portal was released at the beginning of May 2014 in order to facilitate uploading the reporting templates. Technical assistance was provided through an online help desk, subregional training workshops and regional backstopping from the end of April/beginning of May to 3 October 2014.[1] Financial assistance was also provided to eligible countries to contribute to national costs for reporting.[2]

II. Status of the 2014–2015 reporting and review process

3. The Bureau of the CRIC, at its meeting on 3–4 February 2014, adopted a reporting and review time frame, according to which reports should have been submitted before 30 June 2014 with a view to completing the documentation required for CRIC 13, to be convened in the second half of November 2014. At its second intersessional meeting (23 June 2014), the Bureau reviewed the status of the reporting exercise and decided to extend the deadline for reporting by Parties and other reporting entities to 31 July 2014.

4. Taking into consideration that many Parties revised and resubmitted their reports as part of the quality improvement process,[3] the Bureau authorized the secretariat to prepare the preliminary analysis of reports received by 3 October 2014.

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[1] Technical assistance was provided through the Global Support Programme (GSP), funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Global Mechanism as executing agency. The GSP aims at increasing the quantity and improving the quality of information available for the review of the implementation of the Convention through: (a) developing further the national capacity to monitor the implementation of action programmes and to report to the governing bodies of the UNCCD; and (b) improving knowledge management and information sharing at the national, regional and global levels.

[2] Financial assistance was provided though the GEF enabling activities funding in support of the reporting and alignment of action programmes (the UNEP umbrella projects and the other two modalities to access the GEF enabling activities allocations).

[3] Forty-three affected country Parties, 11 developed country Parties and two subregional reporting entities decided to resubmit their reports as a result of the quality improvement process (annex, table 1).

5. By 3 October 2014, 159 of the 168 affected country Parties had submitted their national reports (annex, table 1). Fifty-three reports (or 98 per cent of the expected reports) were from Africa (annex, table 2); 47 (or 89 per cent) from Asia (annex, table 3); 31 (or 94 per cent) from Latin America and the Caribbean (annex, table 4); 12 from Northern Mediterranean countries (annex, table 5); and 15 from Central and Eastern European countries (annex, table 6), as well as one affected country Party not belonging to a regional implementation annex, submitted their reports, totalling 100 per cent.

6. Three of the 14 subregional reporting entities also submitted their reports (annex, table 7). No reports were received on the implementation of regional action programmes (annex, table 8).

7. Altogether, 31 developed country Parties (or 69 per cent) submitted their reports (annex, table 9).

8. The Global Environment Facility, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme also submitted their reports.

Figure 1

Overview of the national reports submitted in the 2014–2015 reporting and review exercise

Reporting countries
Affected country Party (ACP)
Developed country Party (DCP)
Both ACP and DCP
Not a member of the Convention

9. Table 1 in the annex contains information on the reports uploaded on the PRAIS portal by reporting entity, as well as on reports reviewed as part of the quality improvement process up to 3 October 2014. Tables 2 to 9 in the annex contain information on the reporting process by reporting entity, as well as by region and subregion, where applicable.

Annex

Status of the 2014–2015 reporting and review process by reporting entity and by regional implementation annex

Table 1
Overview of the 2014–2015 reporting and review process by reporting entity
(as at 3 October 2014)

	Reports received	*Reports due*	*% (reports received/due)*	*Reports reviewed as part of the quality improvement process*
Affected country Parties	**159**	**168**	**94**	**43**
Annex I - Africa	*53*	*54*	*98*	*10*
Annex II - Asia	*47*	*53*	*89*	*11*
Annex III - Latin America and the Caribbean	*31*	*33*	*94*	*6*
Annex IV - Northern Mediterranean	*12*	*12*	*100*	*6*
Annex V - Central and Eastern Europe	*15*	*15*	*100*	*9*
Other affected country Parties	*1*	*1*	*100*	*1*
Subregional reporting entities	**3**	**14**	**21**	**2**
Regional reporting entities	**0**	**3**	**0**	**0**
Developed Parties	**31**	**45**	**69**	**11**
Other Parties not having indicated their status	**0**	**1**	**0**	**0**
United Nations agencies and intergovernmental organizations, including the Global Environment Facility	**3**			

Table 2
Reports received from affected country Parties of Annex I (Africa)

	Reports received	*Reports due*	*% reports received/due*
Central Africa	**10**	**10**	**100**
Burundi			
Cameroon			
Central African Republic			
Chad			
Congo			
Democratic Republic of the Congo			
Equatorial Guinea			
Gabon			
Rwanda			
Sao Tome and Principe			
Eastern Africa	**8**	**9**	**88**
Comoros			
Djibouti			
Eritrea			
Ethiopia			
Kenya			
Somalia			
Sudan			
Uganda			
Southern Africa	**14**	**14**	**100**
Angola			
Botswana			
Lesotho			
Madagascar			
Malawi			
Mauritius			
Mozambique			
Namibia			
Seychelles			
South Africa			
Swaziland			
United Republic of Tanzania			
Zambia			
Zimbabwe			
Western Africa	**15**	**15**	**100**
Benin			
Burkina Faso			

	Reports received	*Reports due*	*% (reports received/due)*
Cabo Verde			
Côte d'Ivoire			
Gambia			
Ghana			
Guinea			
Guinea-Bissau			
Liberia			
Mali			
Niger			
Nigeria			
Senegal			
Sierra Leone			
Togo			
Northern Africa	6	6	100
Algeria			
Egypt			
Libya			
Mauritania			
Morocco			
Tunisia			
Total Africa	53	54	98

Table 3
Reports received from affected country Parties of Annex II (Asia)

	Reports received	*Reports due*	*% (reports received/due)*
South-East Asia	**10**	**10**	**100**
Cambodia			
Indonesia			
Lao People's Democratic Republic			
Malaysia			
Myanmar			
Philippines			
Singapore			
Thailand			
Timor-Leste			
Viet Nam			
West Asia	**11**	**12**	**92**
Iran (Islamic Republic of)			
Iraq			
Jordan			
Kuwait			
Lebanon			
Oman			
Qatar			
Saudi Arabia			
Syrian Arab Republic			
United Arab Emirates			
Yemen			
Pacific	**12**	**15**	**80**
Cook Islands			
Fiji			
Kiribati			
Micronesia (Federated States of)			
Nauru			
Niue			
Palau			
Samoa			
Solomon Islands			
Tonga			
Tuvalu			
Vanuatu			
Central Asia	**5**	**5**	**100**
Kazakhstan			

	Reports received	*Reports due*	*% (reports received/due)*
Kyrgyzstan			
Tajikistan			
Turkmenistan			
Uzbekistan			
East Asia	**3**	**4**	**75**
China			
Mongolia			
Republic of Korea			
South Asia	**6**	**7**	**86**
Bangladesh			
Bhutan			
India			
Nepal			
Pakistan			
Sri Lanka			
Total Asia	**47**	**53**	**89**

Table 4
Reports received from affected country Parties of Annex III (Latin America and the Caribbean)

	Reports received	*Reports due*	*% (reports received due)*
Mesoamerica	**8**	**8**	**100**
Belize			
Costa Rica			
El Salvador			
Guatemala			
Honduras			
Mexico			
Nicaragua			
Panama			
South Cone	**5**	**5**	**100**
Argentina			
Brazil			
Chile			
Paraguay			
Uruguay			
Andean	**4**	**5**	**80**
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)			
Ecuador			
Peru			
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)			
Caribbean	**14**	**15**	**93**
Antigua and Barbuda			
Bahamas			
Cuba			
Dominican Republic			
Dominica			
Grenada			
Guyana			
Haiti			
Jamaica			
Saint Kitts and Nevis			
Saint Lucia			
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines			
Suriname			
Trinidad and Tobago			
Total Latin America and the Caribbean	**31**	**33**	**94**

Table 5

Reports received from affected country Parties of Annex IV (Northern Mediterranean)

	Reports received	*Reports due*	*% (reports received due)*
Albania			
Croatia			
Cyprus			
Greece			
Hungary			
Israel			
Italy			
Malta			
Portugal			
Slovenia			
Spain			
Turkey			
Total Northern Mediterranean countries	**12**	**12**	**100**

Table 6

Reports received from affected country Parties of Annex V (Central and Eastern Europe)

	Reports received	*Reports due*	*% (reports received due)*
Armenia			
Azerbaijan			
Belarus			
Bosnia and Herzegovina			
Bulgaria			
Georgia			
Latvia			
Montenegro			
Republic of Moldova			
Romania			
Russian Federation			
Serbia			
Slovakia			
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia			
Ukraine			
Total Central and Eastern European countries	**15**	**15**	**100**

Table 7
Reports received from subregional reporting entities

	Reports received	*Reports due*	*% (reports received/due)*
Subregional reporting entities[a]	**3**	**14**	**21**
Conference des ministres en charge des forêts d'Afrique Centrale			
Northeast Asia Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought Network			
The Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia			

[a] A total of 14 subregional reporting entities were identified according to decision 3/COP.10: Conference des ministres en charge des forêts d'Afrique Centrale (Central Africa); Intergovernmental Authority on Development (Eastern Africa); Southern African Development Community (Southern Africa); Economic Community of West African States/Communaute economique des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (Western Africa); Arab Maghreb Union (Northern Africa); Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (West Asia); The Center for People and Forests (South East Asia); Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (Pacific); Northeast Asia Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought Network (East Asia); International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (South Asia); Central American Integration System (Mesoamerica); Andean Community of Nations (Andean subregion); Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development (Caribbean); The Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (Central Asia)

Table 8
Reports received from regional entities

	Reports received	*Reports due*	*% (reports received/due)*
Regional reporting entities[a]	**0**	**3**	**0**

[a] A total of three regional reporting entities were identified according to decision 3/COP.10: African Union (Africa); The Center for People and Forests (Asia); United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (Latin America and the Caribbean)

Table 9
Reports received from developed country Parties

	Reports received	*Reports due*	*% (reports received/due)*
Andorra			
Austria			
Belgium			
Bulgaria			
Croatia			
Cyprus			
Czech Republic			
Denmark			
Finland			
France			
Germany			
Greece			
Hungary			
Israel			
Italy			
Japan			
Latvia			
Liechtenstein			
Lithuania			
Monaco			
Netherlands			
Norway			
Portugal			
Romania			
Slovakia			
Slovenia			
Spain			
Sweden			
Switzerland			
Turkey			
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland			
Total developed country Parties	**31**	**45**	**69**

United Nations

ICCD/CRIC(13)/INF.3

Convention to Combat Desertification

UNCCD

Distr.: General
25 March 2015

English only

Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention
Thirteenth session
Bonn, 25–27 March 2015
Agenda item 4
Formulation, revision and implementation of action programmes in view of the post-2015 sustainable development framework

Interim report of the Intergovernmental Working Group on Land Degradation Neutrality

Note by the secretariat

Summary

This document provides information on the interim report of the Intergovernmental Working Group on Land Degradation Neutrality. By its decision 8/COP.11, the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD decided to establish an intergovernmental working group to: (1) establish a science-based definition of land degradation neutrality (LDN) in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas; (2) develop options relating to arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas that Parties might consider should they strive to achieve LDN; and (3) advise the Convention on the implications for its current and future strategy, programmes and the resource requirements.

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I. Introduction

1. In recognition of the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) contained in "The future we want" (United Nations General Assembly Resolution 66/288) which, inter alia, calls upon Member States to strive to achieve a land-degradation-neutral world in the context of sustainable development, the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) adopted decision 8/COP.11 to establish an intergovernmental working group (IWG) to follow up on the Rio+20 outcomes related to land degradation neutrality (LDN).

2. The IWG was given three specific tasks, namely to: (1) establish a science-based definition of LDN in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas; (2) develop options relating to arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas that Parties might consider should they strive to achieve LDN; and (3) advise the Convention on the implications for its current and future strategy, programmes and the resource requirements. In undertaking its work, the IWG should also take note of the following, inter alia: (a) the ongoing process of elaborating the post-2015 development agenda, including the discussions in the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals called for at Rio+20; (b) relevant economic studies and work undertaken by the Science-Policy Interface, as appropriate; and (c) the importance of identifying synergies to avoid duplication among the Rio conventions, other international bodies, and agencies addressing environment and development issues.

3. The COP also decided that the IWG should prepare a report to be submitted to the Bureau of the COP no later than 60 days before the twelfth session of the COP (COP 12) and that this report should be sent for consideration by the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) and the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention prior to COP 12.

II. Background

4. Decision 8/COP.11 further specified that the IWG will consist of a maximum of five representatives from each region, nominated by the respective regional groups on the basis of nominations by national governments. Following the nomination of the regional representatives, the IWG met for the first time in Brussels on 10–11 February 2014 to establish its terms of reference and programme of work. During this meeting, the IWG appointed Mr. Nicholas Hedley of the European Union and Mr. Bongani Simon Masuku of Swaziland as its co-chairs. In addition, it was agreed that three task forces would be formed to address the three specific tasks contained in paragraph 1 of decision 8/COP.11, each task force with its own coordinator. Task Force 1 on the definition of LDN was led by Mr. German Kust of the Russian Federation; Task Force 2 on options was led by Ms. Jia Xiaoxia of China; and Task Force 3 on the implications was led by Ms. Belsis Llorente of Cuba. The IWG met again in Beijing on 16–18 July 2014 and in Rome on 18–20 March 2015 for a total of three meetings.

5. The members of Task Forces 1 and 2 corresponded by email to produce working documents for discussion at the second meeting of the IWG. Subsequently, a three-month consultation period from 1 August to 31 October 2014 was opened in order to solicit comments from the UNCCD Parties, civil society organizations and observers on the working documents of Task Forces 1 and 2. During that period, comments were received from nine country Parties and the CST's Science-Policy Interface. Prior to the third meeting of the IWG and taking into account the comments received, the coordinators of Task Forces

1 and 2 revised their working documents and presented the way forward in order to achieve consensus. In addition, the coordinator of Task Force 3 circulated a working document for discussion at the third meeting.

6. During the third and final meeting of the IWG, the members agreed on the final text for its interim report. What follows is a brief summary of the discussion and conclusions arrived at during the third meeting of the IWG for each of three tasks mandated in decision 8/COP.11. These conclusions are subject to the final approval of the IWG members.

III. Science-based definition of land degradation neutrality

7. The coordinator of Task Force 1 provided an overview of the comments received during the consultation period and presented various options for arriving at a consensus on the science-based definition of LDN. The subsequent discussion primarily focused on the scope of the Convention and whether to include "arid, semi-arid and dry, sub-humid areas" within the definition. The majority of the IWG members felt that the definition should be universally applicable and that there was no scientific basis for limiting it to "arid, semi-arid and dry, sub-humid areas". The majority opinion was that a universally applicable definition could also help to avoid debating the definition in other forums in the future. The final text was agreed with brackets around "arid, semi-arid and dry, sub-humid areas".

IV. Options that Parties might consider should they strive to achieve land degradation neutrality

8. Similarly, the coordinator of Task Force 2 presented a revised text based on comments received on the options for achieving LDN should countries wish to do so. There was a consensus view that the options suggested in this text be country-driven, aspirational and voluntary. There was agreement on a set of management and policy options at the national and subnational levels as well as options for operationalizing LDN, including a non-exhaustive list of interlinked activities. The final text on options includes the same bracketed text as in the definition text, namely "arid, semi-arid and dry, sub-humid areas".

V. Implications of land degradation neutrality for the Convention's current and future strategy, programmes and the resource requirements

9. The coordinator of Task Force 3 on the implications of LDN for the Convention presented draft text to the entire IWG for the first time. The initial discussion revealed the consensus view that the objectives of the Convention and its existing operation are fully consistent with the objective of LDN, and thus the IWG saw no useful purpose in amending the current the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) (The Strategy). In organizing the future work of the Convention, the group presented two options for when the current Strategy expires, acknowledging that there are numerous other options which could be considered. Likewise for programmes and resources requirements, the implications for LDN were framed in general terms with illustrative examples of options to consider in this regard. The only bracketed text in this section concerns the language on "technology transfers and capacity building", where consensus is still possible before issuing the final report.

VI. Next steps

10. In closing the third and final meeting of the IWG, the Co-Chairs presented the next steps whereby they would prepare an introduction outlining the IWG deliberation process in factual terms and submit it for the review and approval of the IWG. This would then be compiled with the final text of the three Task Forces agreed to at the third meeting of the IWG without further editing or commentary, and presented as one report to the COP. The final IWG report will be delivered to the UNCCD secretariat sometime in June 2015 for dissemination in all official languages to the Parties at least 60 days before COP 12.